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A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ROTHERHAM,

B E F O R E

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND MASTER

O F

THE MOST ANCIENT GRAND LODGE

O F A L L E N G L A N D,

H I S O F F I C E R S,

A N D

THE NEWLY CONSTITUTED

ROTHERHAM DRUIDICAL LODGE

O F

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,

DECEMBER 22, 1778.

BY THE REV. BROTHER JOHN PARKER, G. CHAPLAIN,
VICAR OF ST. HELEN'S IN YORK.

Published at the request of the GRAND MASTER, and the
rest of the BRETHREN.

Y O R K:

Printed by W. BLANCHARD and Co. 1779.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



To the Most Worshipful GRAND MASTER, and the
rest of the Brethren of the Most Ancient GRAND
LODGE OF ALL ENGLAND.

BROTHERS and FELLOWS,

THIS Sermon is most affectionately dedicated to you,
with a sincere wish that your LODGE may long
flourish, and receive many such acquisitions as that
which occasioned this discourse.

You are the successors of those brave men, who, by
an uncommon fortitude and integrity, preserved their
Principles, Secrets, Mysteries, and Order, through a
long course of persecution, from the inhuman slaughter
of their predecessors, the Druids, till He, in whose rule
and governance are the hearts of Kings, raised them up
a Royal Protector, in this City, the amiable Edwin:
And as by this succession you are the only GRAND LODGE
in England, I hope you will consider it your particular
duty, to discountenance all irregularities, and illegal in-
novations, and constantly maintain strict order, harmony,
and brotherly-love.

YORK, JAN. 12, }
1779. }

I am,

Brothers and Fellows,

Your most affectionate Brother,

JOHN PARKER.

To the Hon. William Lloyd Garrison, and the
rest of the friends of the Anti-Slavery Cause.

My dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the
proper authorities for their consideration. I am, Sir, very
truly, your obedient servant,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq.,
Boston, Mass.
The Hon. Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq.,
Boston, Mass.
The Hon. Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq.,
Boston, Mass.

I am, Sir, very truly,
your obedient servant,
Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq.,
Boston, Mass.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Esq.,

Boston, Mass.

JOHN BAKER.

A
S E R M O N, &c.

ACTS, Chap. xvii. Part of the 17th Verse.

FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING.

THE Great Jehovah is only self-existent, and the real source of all created being. From his fulness have all we received our existence, our mental faculties, and means of support: In him we live, and move, and have our being: And, in this respect, all the sons and daughters of men are properly called the Offspring of God. He is their common father, they are all objects of his common bounty, and preserved by his common providence: But there are some amongst them, who, by contem-
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plating his works, consulting his will, and rendering a devout grateful adoration to their all-gracious Creator, conciliate a greater degree of regard, and are eminently styled the Sons of God, his peculiar offspring.

Should I now assert, that We, who are called Free and Accepted Masons ^{or Imaginary Sons} are of this number, and claim this great privilege, it would, perhaps, seem strange to many of you, who have looked upon us in a very common light; but howsoever strange it may appear at first view, I trust, that I shall be fortunate enough to-day, by nothing but the bare recital of simple truth, to incline many to this opinion.

In the earlier ages of the world, when its inhabitants were few, and their subsistence was precarious, and procured by hard industry, they sensibly felt the additional assistance of every individual. Hence families, as they increased, united themselves and their labours for the common good: And as age, on account of its experience in this infancy of science, was justly deemed the seat of wisdom, the head of every

every family was their governor and instructor both in temporal and religious matters: He was their King and Priest, to whom all paid an absolute deference and obedience. But as mankind multiplied, and the union of different families formed large societies, and their increasing numbers were more than sufficient for their necessary tasks, these sage men wisely determined to increase their own knowledge, by devoting themselves to contemplation and study, and to promote the happiness of their subordinate dependents, by regulating and supporting a due course of religious and civil government. To effect these salutary, these noble purposes, they formed themselves into *select bodies*; and, as rewards for their services, they soon were exempted from many common impositions, which it was necessary for the community at large to bear, and enjoyed immunities which no other set of people could claim. It was easy to foresee that many from different, sometimes from false motives, would seek admission into *this order*; but, that they might be certain that every man who craved this singular favour, acted only from their own noble, original intention; and, like them,

them, disinterestedly pursued the grand design of Jehovah's glory, and the felicity of his people, they enjoined a strict and rigid probation, which none could think of undergoing, but those who were inspired (if I may use the expression) with the same great, divine sentiments. Experience presently convinced them, that many, who were unwilling to be tried, and feared to stand the test, borrowed the deceitful mask of pretension, and sought admission by that, amongst those true and faithful ones, where no base pretender had ever entered: But they rendered that abortive, by wisely adopting certain regular signs and tokens, whereby one brother might know another to be a true man in the dark, as well as in the light, and so prevent impositions.

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 Their wisdom and sincerity of intention were equalled by their conduct, both public and private. They contemplated the works of nature with a curious and with a devout attention. They soon perceived the footsteps of an infinite God, and deduced from his mighty works his glorious attributes, wisdom, power, ubiquity, justice, and unbounded goodness.

ness. They perceived that the faculties of the soul were emanations from the Divine Being, and they rationally concluded that she must be immortal, and responsible for her actions in a future life, and would meet with rewards and punishments suitable to her conduct. They did not sit down with mere speculation, but called forth the powers of the soul into real and useful action. Their unwearied perseverance in the pursuits of wisdom and knowledge, was inexpressible and unparalleled! And every progression in the difficult path of science was made easy to a follower, for they were always ready to give instructions to a Brother.

No wonder that a fraternity like this should soon become famous and respected: Accordingly, we find it early in a flourishing condition, both in the land of Canaan and in Egypt. And we shall be less surprized at this, when we consider that it had its foundation in the glory of the Eternal Jehovah, and the happiness of his rational creatures; and that the godlike men, who were instruments in these great designs, made it their whole concern and em-
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ploy to perfect the great work they had undertaken : Consequently the people felt the immediate good effects of this beneficial institution.

Their first great care was to impress on the people just ideas of the nature of the Deity, but especially his strict justice in not passing over transgression and sin. And that this might have its due weight, they assiduously inculcated his omnipresence, and reminded the people that he really was in every place, throughout the universe, remarking both good and evil actions and designs : And they never failed to add the consideration of his infinite power to punish. To assist these striking doctrines, they worshipped upon the high mountains, where an extensive horizon brought to mind that the presence of Jehovah was boundless ; or, in the secret recesses of a consecrated grove, where the solemn horror of the place struck the soul with the sacred terror of a present, omnipotent God.

They were deeply skilled in philosophy, yet they never made use of abstruse reasoning in their public teaching,

teaching, but accommodated their instructions to the understandings of their people, and taught things difficult of comprehension by things well known, and familiar objects became symbols of eternal truths. The oak was a symbol of the Deity because of its strength and duration. The sun and moon were thought striking emblems of his providential œconomy and power, therefore frequently referred to, but they would not admit that any thing in the universe could properly represent the glorious Godhead. To assist their people's recollection, they deduced instruction from common concerns, and made them symbols of devotion, so that domestic things became monitors of their duty. To this indefatigable care for the souls of men, they added continual endeavours to make their present state comfortable; and for this laudable purpose they studied and made great proficiency in all the liberal and useful arts. Physics, geometry, astronomy, and, in short, whatever tended to enlarge the mind, or was conducive to real use, their unwearied industry got possession of: And above all, their own fellowship, their union, and their brotherly love was so perfect, that they seemed

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all actuated by the same spirit, and *all* to be of *one* heart and of *one* mind.

Every man who valued pure devotion ; every man who wished to improve his scientific knowledge ; every man who delighted in virtuous friendship, who longed for a true and faithful friend, which is as a man's own soul, and sticketh closer than a brother, would naturally crowd to be taken and accepted amongst this select Brotherhood : And this is the reason why we find in their annals the greatest names of antiquity. Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, was one of these Magi. He left his native country, overspread with idolatry, to join his-self with the faithful in the land of Canaan. He enjoyed a rich intercourse of the points of fellowship with Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, and was happily united in the same mode of worship. He built an altar under the oak of Mamre, he worshipped in the sacred groves, he sacrificed on the tops of mountains, and planted a grove his-self to call upon God. He received blessings from Brother Melchizedek, and returned him tithes ; and in Egypt, before idolatry
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had got footing, in a time of famine, he was received and relieved as a Brother.

In this flourishing kingdom, the land of Egypt, a branch of this society, called the Egyptian Priests, became very famous, and were renowned far and near for their religious mysteries, their polity, and uncommon skill in both useful and ornamental arts. Amongst these, Moses the servant of God was educated, and deeply skilled in all their mysterious rites; and it is mentioned in Holy Writ, as no small recommendation of Moses, that he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians. And when he had brought out the children of Israel from among them, he communicated his light and knowledge to the Elders of his people, and many of their Rulers and Judges, the Kings David and Solomon, Prophets, and the Sons of the Prophets, were of this antient, wise, upright, and therefore honourable order. Elijah the Tishbite wore their sacred badge in his prophetic office, and the harbinger of our Saviour did not enter upon his holy mission without it. I shall enumerate no more great names, but mention.

tion three facts, which reflect the highest honour on this fraternity. Moses, the greatest lawgiver on earth; John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way before the Saviour of the world, and the three Magi, wise men of the East, who proclaimed his birth at Jerusalem, even in Herod's court, and offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, were all members of this holy Brotherhood.

Their arts and commerce were means of disseminating their religious tenets and customs in many distant parts of the world, both from Egypt and Phenicia, but especially the latter; for, Ptolomy says, they navigated all the Mediterranean sea, and planted colonies at a very early period, above a thousand years before Christ, in Gaul, Germany, and Britain. The wholesome plant, fostered in these thriving soils, soon took root and filled the lands: And this island in particular was blest with a long succession of holy and skilful Brothers. Their sacred veneration for the oak, procured them the name of Druids, from the old British word *Drud*, the Celtic word *Deru*, or the Greek ΔΡΥΣ, an oak. And from their first institution,

tution, till the bloody hand of power massacred these venerable, righteous men, in their own sacred groves, before their own holy altars, they maintained the same principles, and the same œconomy.

Amongst these Druids we find, as amongst their predecessors in the East, the same noble refined sentiments of the Deity, the same ardent love of the Brotherhood, the same assiduous cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, the same cautionary distinctions, and the same impartial love, and unbiaſſed distribution of justice. And here, I cannot pass over an observation of Julius Cæsar in his 6th book of Commentaries, which several have brought to prove that the Druids offered human sacrifices. He says, “the whole nation of Gaul is superstitious, and they who are afflicted with grievous diseases, and they who are harassed with war and dangers, either offer up human sacrifices, or vow to make them; that the ministry of these sacrifices is committed to the Druids, because they think that to appease the Deity of the Immortal Gods, the life of one man must be sacrificed for that of another; and these sacrifices are publicly instituted.

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The punishment of those taken in robbery, theft, or any crime is thought most acceptable to the Immortal Gods, but when a number of those are wanting, they descend even to the punishment of the innocent." Should the superstition have been so great in Gaul, that one man would have wished to sacrifice another on slight pretences, can we suppose that the Druids, who were inflexibly just, and who held this maxim sacred "to injure no man," would have become the ministers of such wanton cruelty! It is improbable to the last degree. But if we closely attend to the whole account, we shall find it an account only of judiciary proceedings. He hath told us a little before, that, "they met yearly to settle disputes, and to pass judgment upon murderers, and other criminals," and the observation before quoted seems an account of *their* punishment, who were found guilty. The Attribute of Justice they held in the highest esteem. They considered themselves as the ministers of a God infinite in Justice, and it did not depreciate their high office, to execute the sentence they had uprightly pronounced, and to take the life with their own hands, which was a just forfeit to the laws of God
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and their Country. This was done in a darksome recess of a sacred Grove; the holy fires were kindled in such a manner as to add terror to the gloom, and the whole solemnity struck the beholders with the utmost awe! With the utmost reverence of vindictive justice, and the utmost horror of the deed, for which the malefactor suffered! His life was an expiation for his crime, and the punishment was rendered dreadful, to deter others from infringing the great law of right; for all their doctrines and efforts aimed at one glorious end; to make men wise, just, and courageous.

That innocent men were punished by them, when guilty could not be found, Cæsar must have learned from hearsay. Some of his observations he acknowledges came from that quarter. In his 5th book, he begins his description of Britain thus: "The interior part of the island is inhabited by the original inhabitants, they say," from which it is more than probable that many other of his assertions are equally vague, though he has not annexed to them, they say: And none bear greater marks of being so than this.

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Where could he glean up such information? Perhaps from the dissatisfied relatives of some unhappy victim, whose thread was cut in the midst of daring crimes; for we all know, that it is no new thing, for the near friends of the wretched sufferers to think law and justice too severe in their demands. He could have no intimation of their secret resolves and determinations from the Druids themselves, the only sure source of information: No; they never violated secrecy, morality, nor brotherly-love. He could not extort any thing from them that should be hid from vulgar eyes: No; he might cut down their groves, make his sword reek and his arrows drunk with their blood; but all the rigorous cruelties that tyranny could invent, could never explore the root of any heart, where the secrets of Druids laid. Therefore as he could not come at any certain information, either by insinuation or extortion; and as this unjust cruelty is contrary to their known principles and conduct, we may rationally conclude, that it is falsely, or mistakenly laid to their charge.

Cæsar's was the unlucky hand which distressed the
Druids

Druids of Gaul, and pointed to the calamities of those in Britain. Those calamities were inflicted with the utmost severity by the cruel Suetonius, who burnt their groves, and sacrificed these guileless inoffensive men upon their own altars. Agricola finished the attempt, and erased the name, and destroyed the liberties of the Druids. The few remaining ones, who had escaped the intended general slaughter, were unwilling to part with the religion, and sacred customs, they had been taught to venerate from their birth; they therefore privately met and made profelytes; and though the distractions of their country, and a state of subjection, prevented the exercise of many of their rites; and the different customs introduced into this island, by its numerous tyrannic masters, intruded upon them, and mingled innovations with their original institutions; yet they preserved their initiatory requisites and ceremonies, their secret signs and tokens, and the general œconomy of their order, till the time of Edwin, a Saxon Prince of Northumberland, who united them in the City of York, under Royal Sanction, and constituted, with the assistance of the rest of the Brethren, what we
now

now call a LODGE of FREE and ACCEPTED MASONs: *Free*, because no bondman could be admitted; and *Accepted*, because they had stood the trying test of several probationary degrees with universal approbation. The present name, *Masons*, is somewhat difficult to be clearly accounted for, though there are many probable conjectures, none of which I shall now trouble you with, for a name signifies little, while we are able to trace so high an original. I doubt not, but many of you have formed strange notions concerning us, and, perhaps, from the name, concluded, that we were originally a society of mechanics; But, as you have already heard, our first founders were the true worshippers of the one true God, and sincere professors of his holy religion. They studied, and contemplated on the divine nature and its attributes. They studied the beauties, searched into and developed the secret powers of nature. They improved and carried to great perfection all the liberal, and useful arts, and invented new ones. They studied the nature of the human soul, and taught that most interesting knowledge, the knowledge of a man's self, and the perfect morality which
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would make him accepted of his Great Creator, who required of him a reasonable service. In those dark ages, vulgar minds were little accustomed to reason about things, consequently, could not understand much of the indivisibility of the first cause, nor how so many various operations as we see of it in nature should be ascribed to one only; therefore, these teachers were obliged to have recourse to hieroglyphics, and emblems for explanation; and this manner pervaded all their religious moral teaching. They were sensible of the absurdity of exposing their mysteries to vulgar eyes, and of the impropriety of revealing their light and knowledge to any but those who were duly prepared for, properly entered into, and lawfully admitted members of their fraternity. They observed in the strictest sense confidential *secrecy* and *fidelity*, to the community in general and each Brother in particular. Their moral conduct was so upright, that it was spotless. Their universal benevolence was very exemplary; and their brotherly-love was so intense and unfeigned, that perfect harmony and perfect fellowship resided amongst them, and they dwelt together in *unity*, in the bond of *peace*.

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We,

We, their successors, follow their steps as nearly as our light and knowledge will direct. We have transmitted to us, and we preserve, the singular good œconomy of our great predecessors, in the regulations of our society. We have transmitted to us, and we must be careful to conceal, the *secrets* and *mysteries* of our order; amongst which, is that universal intimation, whereby Brothers, born in distant parts of the world, whose languages are unintelligible to each other, may be certain that they are true men, true Brethren of the same family. And should any one of us be cast in distress amongst a people whose language we could not understand, by this intimation (if they were Brethren) we should find compassion, relief, and brotherly love. We pay all due reverence to God, our Almighty Maker, nor suffer his holy name to be irreverently used among us. No atheist, no libertine, no reprobate who dares to dishonour the Most High, is ever permitted to enter the sacred door of our Lodge. We suffer no calumny, slander, or evil-speaking; nor religious or political disputes. We are Brothers, the Brothers of each other's choice, and we study to promote each other's

other's interest and happiness. We heartily sympathize with a distressed Brother; for we know that pity and kindness often keep at a great distance from distress, and commonly miss their way to the door of want; therefore we are more friendly; we visit him with all the kind concern of brotherly affection, and cheerfully and liberally relieve. Nay, we often comfort his dejected, mourning widow, and his helpless little ones partake of our fraternal consolation. We unanimously obey our well contrived regulations for discipline and order. We vie with each other in kindness; every Brother obliges as much as he is obliged, and all is harmony, and all is love!

Now I have revealed to you, that are no Masons, as much as I am warranted to do. Permit me to enquire with what success? Will it induce any of you to become Masons? Do you feel your hearts inclined to this amiable Brotherhood? Has this portrait attracted any longing or esteem?—I can scarcely hope so much from this weak imperfect colouring; but if you have received from the faint design the least favourable conception of what it should have more perfectly

fectly delineated, let your own imaginations supply the rest.—Think, and reflect thus: If the defective representation of this unskilful hand be pleasing, what must the proportion, ornament, grace, and beauty of the original be! The genuine form, the real perfections, of which this poor attempt is the rude outlines! Such a reflection, deeply made, might, perhaps, induce you to seek the benefits of this amicable, happy society; for if you delight in order, if you delight in social happiness, if you delight in brotherly love, you will not hesitate to become Free and Accepted Masons.

You, my Brethren, I exhort to hold fast your profession; to persevere in the unanimous support of your antient, noble order, and to exert every mean in your power, to promote an universal spread of your high calling. The wisest and the greatest men of distant ages, Patriarchs, Prophets, and mighty Kings, are at the head of your august body; and you have received, by a marvellous course of tradition, their religious and social customs, and œconomy. These are in no hands but yours, nor can be communicated

to any other set of people; therefore be careful to preserve them, and assiduous in making further researches; for your knowledge, derived by this channel, is a key to the holy rites and solemnities of antiquity, and throws a ray of light, not only on some of its most valuable profane authors, but on the Scriptures themselves, especially the Old Testament. This should induce you, for the benefit of mankind, to strive to enlarge the province of Masonry, that its glorious light may be more generally revealed, because you know that it must be hid from all but the eyes of Masons.

The great principles of the Brotherhood are found in the holy teaching of the Son of God: They are incorporated amongst his doctrines, and were fully illustrated by his example; therefore true Masons readily embrace the Christian System, and cheerfully conform to its duties. May these principles be deeply rooted in your hearts, and so animated by the great examples of the illustrious personages just mentioned, as to bring forth the fruits of righteousness an hundred fold.

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To you, my Brethren of this newly constituted Lodge, I must observe, that the strictest caution will be necessary in admitting Brothers and Fellows. Accept of none, but such as are truly moral, and well reported. With such only your Lodge will flourish, and with such only can you enjoy brotherly satisfaction and comfort. I do not doubt your care, nor your penetration. I know you do not need my instruction in this matter; but with the freedom, and the hearty concern of a Brother, I beg leave to remind you in time, lest, in an unguarded hour, you should too hastily adopt any, whose conduct will bring upon you a stain and a blot.

Consider what I have said, and may the heavenly light of truth illumine your minds; be a light unto your paths through the perplexing thorny mazes of the wilderness of this world; and guide your feet into the way of lasting peace.

I conclude with recommending you to the protecting care of the Great Jehovah, the Maker and omnipotent Ruler of the Universe, the Father of light
and

mercy, the shield and great reward of his chosen ones, whose Offspring ye also are. May his wisdom be your guide, his truth your confidence, and his power your support. May you ever bear in mind the great end for which he gave you being, and in all your conduct glorify him, and so pass through these transient, fleeting, temporal things, that you may meet with a joyful welcome, and an abundant entrance into those lasting glories, which will never end.

Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invifible, the only wife God, be honour, kingdom, power, and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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money, the shield and great reward of his chosen
one, whose Offering ye also are. May his wisdom
be your guide, his truth your confidence, and his
power your support. May you ever bear in mind
the great end to which ye are called, and in
all your conduct give glory to his name, and to his strength
these nations, these things, that you
may meet with a joyful home, and an abundant
entrance into those lasting joys, which will never
end.



Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invisible,
the only wife God, be honour, kingdom, power,
and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

F I N I S

